Business Plan

2017–2018

Department of
Municipal Affairs

NOVA SCOTIA

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Budget 2017–2018: Business Plans

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Minister's Message

I am pleased to share with you the 2017–2018 Business Plan for the Department of Municipal Affairs. With a wide variety of programs and services, the department is committed to supporting municipalities to ensure healthy, safe and vibrant communities across Nova Scotia.

In 2017-18, our work on programs, policies, legislation, and initiatives to support this objective will be strengthened by our new partnership framework with the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities. Signed in December 2016, this document formalizes our commitment to work together on joint priorities, to enhance communications and to be accountable for outcomes.

Our joint priorities include the modernization of the Municipal Government Act and the Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, a standardized regulatory framework for municipal expense policies including online posting, and a review of governance models for municipal viability.

The ability to influence economic development is a priority for municipalities. Last year, we gave municipalities more tax flexibility to encourage businesses to locate where it makes sense for communities, such as downtown cores and main streets. We are also helping municipalities drive economic activity through enhanced land use planning and by enhancing the regional enterprise network model. In partnership with the Department of Business, we are supporting the expansion of more widely distributed, higher speed rural internet program.

Upgrading infrastructure is another priority for municipalities. Last year, we helped them leverage nearly $183 million in federal and provincial funding commitments for water, wastewater and transit projects in communities across the province. We will continue to help municipalities gain maximum access to federal infrastructure funding.

In the face of wildfires, drought, and floods, our Emergency Management Office responded with more assistance, more quickly than ever before. They also helped coordinate support for Syrian refugees settling in Nova Scotia.

This year, we have three priorities that focus on keeping Nova Scotians safe. In addition to their ongoing duties, the Emergency Management Office will refresh the 911 service and the Office of the Fire Marshal will continue work with partners on its review of fire services.

We will also update the building code and fire safety regulations, permitting construction of six-storey wooden buildings, creating new environmentally friendly and sustainable opportunities for our local forest industry.

With a renewed commitment to working in partnership, we will advance these priorities together to make a difference in our communities and to the lives of Nova Scotians.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Zach Churchill
Minister, Department of Municipal Affairs

Departmental Mandate and Core Functions

The Department of Municipal Affairs (DMA) enables municipalities to build healthy, safe and vibrant communities, ensures fire and building safety, and works in collaboration with municipal, provincial and federal departments to strengthen provincial and municipal preparedness through planning, training and exercise. This cooperative approach enhances the ability of Nova Scotians to augment community resilience during times of emergencies and helps municipalities become stronger and economically viable.

This mandate is delivered through two offices and three divisions:

- the Office of the Fire Marshal (OFM)), which has fire and life safety as its core function and the Emergency Management Office (EMO), which strives to enhance Nova Scotians' safety and well-being through innovative, collaborative, and integrated emergency planning and coordination;
- the Municipal Planning and Advisory Services Division, which provides sound governance and financial advice and services to municipal partners;
- the Grants, Programs and Operations Division, which administers programs and distributes infrastructure funding; and
- the Corporate Policy, Planning and Strategic Initiatives Division, which provides policy advice and leads corporate strategic initiatives such as legislative modernization.

The department helps our municipalities build healthy, safe and vibrant communities by supporting sound municipal governance and working with municipalities to improve economic growth and viability. It protects the health and safety of Nova Scotians in emergency situations and through the promotion of fire, building and life safety practices. The department also helps municipalities invest in and manage key resources and infrastructure.

Priorities for 2017-2018

While most departmental responsibilities relate to, and are focused on, delivering core business services, the department will also initiate and advance projects to further the Government's innovation priority and to deliver on the Ivany One Nova Scotia report recommendations. As well, the department will continue to make progress on four special mandates established for the department in 2016:

1. Establish priorities, including removing disincentives for municipal restructuring and strengthening the provincial-municipal relationship.
2. Develop for consideration a new model for the Regional Enterprise Network program that supports ONE Nova Scotia economic growth, youth workforce attachment, and rural entrepreneurship.
3. Develop a provincial approach to align land use planning with economic growth.
4. Maximize access to federal funding for municipalities and infrastructure improvements.

Goals and Activities to Achieve Mandate and Core Functions

A. Collaborative Goals and Activities

Through collaboration with representatives of our municipal partners (the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities (UNSM) and the Association of Municipal Administrators of Nova Scotia (AMA)), numerous joint priorities have been established for 2017-2018 and beyond. Some priorities represent new initiatives while others represent ongoing work:

- Develop a protocol for consultation with municipalities on legislative and regulatory changes that may impact municipal governments.
- Collaborate on the Joint Municipal Accountability and Transparency committee to develop a standardized regulatory framework for municipal expense policies that includes online reporting.
- Continue to review the *Municipal Government Act* and *HRM Charter* and recommend changes to modernize the legislation. This work will incorporate an innovation lens to determine how legislative reform and municipal governance could better enable innovation and economic development at the municipal level while aligning with provincial objectives.
- Review municipal governance models and identify options for structural change that strengthen municipal viability.
- Continue to support the Financial Condition Index as a tool to help municipalities improve their fiscal capacity.
- Provide continued regional planning support including developing minimum planning standards.
- Continue to support the development of the Asset Management System, which is a module in the Municipal Reporting System; build as part of the Municipal Data Management System.
- Continue to support the Regional Enterprise Network Model (REN) to enhance economic development throughout the province.
- Continue work on the Fire Services Review.

B. Departmental Goals and Activities

Other departmental goals related to DMA's core functions and special mandates, include:

Mandate/Core Function	Goal and Activities
Special Mandate: Establish priorities, including removing disincentives for municipal restructuring and strengthening the provincial-municipal relationship.	A) Provide support for municipalities that are committed to a process of re-structuring.
	B) Review municipal governance models to identify options for structural change that strengthen municipal viability.
	C) Support municipal units to address areas of financial risk.
	D) Develop options to address issues that are disincentives to restructuring.

Mandate/Core Function	Goal and Activities
Special Mandate: Maximize access to federal funding for municipalities and infrastructure improvements.	A) Administer programs and distribute funding for ongoing federal infrastructure programs (i.e. New Building Canada Fund, Clean Water and Wastewater Fund).
	B) Provide program support and distribute funding under the Federal Gas Tax Fund to municipalities to help build and revitalize local public infrastructure (projects include public transit, local roads, solid waste, water and wastewater).
	C) Administer grant programs that provide operating funding to municipalities (Equalization, Farm Land Grant, Fire Protection, Grant in Lieu of Provincial Property Tax, Nova Scotia Power Inc. Grant in Lieu, and HST Offset).
	D) Administer a variety of programs that provide provincial funding to municipalities (i.e. Provincial Capital Assistance Program, Flood Risk Infrastructure Investment Program).
Special Mandate: Develop for consideration a new model for the Regional Enterprise Network (REN) program that supports ONE Nova Scotia economic growth, youth workforce attachment, and rural entrepreneurship.	A) Develop new tools to support RENs improve operational effectiveness, for example, data portal, start-up guide, communications document.
	B) Review the framework to support the REN structure and governance.
	C) Complete multi-jurisdictional study of youth labour force attachment and rural entrepreneurship strategies.
	D) Finalize review of RENs, which includes considerations associated with shared economic development objectives, youth workforce attachment and rural entrepreneurship to further the Province's innovation agenda; circulate report to stakeholders and develop plan for implementing recommendations.
Special Mandate: Develop a provincial approach to align land use planning with economic growth.	A) Bring more datasets in the Nova Scotia Geospatial Infrastructure to support and promote land use planning and economic development; build data management tools and viewers to deliver the data to RENs and Municipal Units (MUs).
	B) Consider tools to strengthen regional planning, including reviewing the Statements of Provincial Interest (SPI) for relevance and effectiveness, making recommendations for improvements, and considering potential new SPIs.
	C) Support regional planning and develop minimum planning standards.
Core Function: Help build healthy vibrant communities	Develop a SPI on Healthy Built Environments to support accessibility, active transportation and other healthy options.

Mandate/Core Function	Goal and Activities
Core Function: Help municipalities address impacts of climate change	A) Develop a plan to support MUs in implementing their Municipal Climate Change Action Plans (MCCAPs).
	B) Strengthen planning rules related to flood plains, etc.
	C) Invest in climate adaptation infrastructure.
	D) Work with other departments on implementation of the Pan Canadian Framework.
Core Function: Respond to emergencies	Manage claims related to the Sydney flood and provide prompt and effective emergency response and relief to Nova Scotians in collaboration and co-operation with federal, provincial, municipal, non-governmental, and community-based organizations.
Core Function: Deliver Provincial 911 service.	Complete the acquisition and deployment of 911 hardware/software upgrade in collaboration with our partner organizations (Bell, Emergency Health Services, 911 public safety answering points, etc.).
Core Function: Support strong municipal governance and delivery of legislative mandate	Review departmental legislation and create a five-year legislative renewal plan.
Core Function: Create a safe and engaging workplace	A) Educate on, and promote, Occupational Health and Safety initiatives and roles/responsibilities.
	B) Develop and implement plan to improve employee engagement.
	c) Ensure fair hiring policies are followed, performance appraisals are completed and HR by Design priorities are considered and acted on (Diversity, recognition, succession management, FlexNS etc.).
	D) Develop space requirements for tender for leased facilities, considering cross departmental impacts.
	E) Ensure staff understand both the broader Innovation ecosystem and the internal opportunity for innovation as a key driver of new ideas and action within the department.

Collaboration & Partnerships Across Government and with Stakeholders

Collaboration and partnerships with other departments, other governments, and with stakeholders are essential for DMA to successfully address and implement Government and departmental priorities. DMA acts as a liaison for municipalities, a voice within Government to represent the interests of the 50 municipal units in Nova Scotia. To improve governance and help municipalities invest wisely in infrastructure and renewal, DMA must collaborate with numerous other departments and form partnerships with stakeholder groups. These approaches are also important to Nova Scotia communities and to industry for the protection of people, their property and the environment from the effects of emergency events; and for fire and building safety, which involves collaboration with other government departments along with the building construction stakeholders and our municipalities around the delivery of fire services. Below are a few examples of DMA's collaboration and partnership activities.

Mandate/Core Function	Collaboration and Partnerships
Mandate: Develop for consideration a new model for the Regional Enterprise Network program that supports ONE Nova Scotia economic growth, youth workforce attachment, and rural entrepreneurship.	Work with other government departments, Crown Corporations such as Nova Scotia Business Inc. (NSBI), MUs, First Nations, and the business community to continue to improve the RENs
Mandate: Maximize access to federal funding for municipalities and infrastructure improvements.	Work with Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal (TIR), Nova Scotia Environment (NSE), Communities Culture and Heritage, Finance and Treasury Board, and Intergovernmental Affairs (IGA) to identify priorities for infrastructure investment and to work collaboratively to maximize the value of federal funding.
Mandate: Develop a provincial approach to align land use planning with economic growth.	• Work with the Internal Services Department and NSBI to identify and migrate data to the Nova Scotia Geospatial Infrastructure (NSGI) • Collaborate with other departments (such as Department of Business (DOB), Natural Resources (DNR), Labour and Advanced Education (LAE), Energy (DOE), TIR, and NSE to move datasets that support economic and land use planning into the NSGI. Link in other departments and agencies as the project progresses • Work with MUs, RENs and municipal stakeholders to understand requirements for land use planning linked to economic growth, which can be used to build technology viewers and other tools to deliver data to the RENs and MUs

Mandate/Core Function	Collaboration and Partnerships
Core Function: Support healthy sustainable communities and pursue the inclusion of provisions that address issues related to aging in place.	Work with Department of Seniors, DOE, TIR, Department of Health and Wellness on development of a new Statement of Provincial Interest.
Core Function: Improve fire services	Work with UNSM, AMA and fire services to develop an action plan including tools to assist municipalities with the delivery of fire services across the province.
Core Function: Provide financial and governance advice to municipalities	With the AMA and the UNSM, review the Financial Condition Indicators with the goal of enhancing the effectiveness, reliability and use of the indicators.

Participation in Government-Wide Initiatives

The Government is working to break down silos across Government and build linkages with our partners outside of Government to change our economic and social paradigm. In We Choose Now, the Government identified key areas of focus that impact all our municipalities: Going Global, Our Ocean Advantage, Innovation Hubs, Our ICT Momentum, Immigration and Welcoming Communities, Youth Employment and Retention. These areas support an innovative approach to implementing the Ivany OneNS goals – working together to find new solutions and opportunities. In 2017-2018, DMA will participate in several provincial initiatives to strengthen our innovative outlook – to build a positive vision for the province and build synergy among those working in similar fields. Helping municipalities understand that together they are greater than the sum of their parts, that together they can achieve greater outcomes, will be a priority for DMA this year. Listed below are several Government-wide initiatives in which DMA will play an important role.

Government-Wide Initiative	DMA Participation and Role
Rural Internet Program	DMA will work with the DOB on upgrades and the expansion of rural internet across Nova Scotia.

Government-Wide Initiative	DMA Participation and Role
Climate Change	• DMA will collaborate with other departments such as Finance and Treasury Board, IGA, NSE, and TIR to consider how to implement the Pan-Canadian Framework on Climate Change and Clean Growth. • DMA will develop a cross-department project to help Government move forward on climate change action plans. Actions to address climate change will be supported by all parts of DMA, for example: o the department will help MUs manage flood plains and areas prone to coastal erosion through land use planning directives; o the department will work with MUs to invest in municipal wastewater or freshwater systems to ensure adequate water in drought or mechanisms to decrease flooding; o EMO will continue to develop regional approaches emergency management; and o OFM will consider how climate change needs to be addressed through fire safety and building code changes.
Action Plan for Aging Population	DMA will work with: • the Department of Seniors (Seniors) to establish a memorandum of understanding between the UNSM and the Province to promote and support the development of age-friendly communities; • Seniors to develop a recognition program for municipalities that have taken active steps to become an Age-friendly community; • Seniors, DHW, DOE, and TIR to develop a statement of provincial interest on healthy built environments that support healthy sustainable communities, including consideration of aging in place; • Seniors to align age-friendly community planning with municipal planning by developing guidance materials, encouraging municipalities to collaborate regionally on age-friendly community planning, and create sample land use zoning or by-laws that support age-friendly communities; • Housing NS, Seniors and DHW to review the effectiveness of the Statement of Provincial Interest on housing to influence municipal planning and zoning policies so that they support diversity of housing forms and other options.

Department of Municipal Affairs			
	2016-2017 Estimate	2016-2017 Forecast	2017-2018 Estimate
Program & Service Area	*($thousands)*	*($thousands)*	*($thousands)*
Senior Management	693	581	697
Corporate Policy, Planning and Strategic Initiatives	0	0	1,037
Grants, Programs & Operations	91,055	91,314	236,731
Municipal Planning & Advisory Services	89,095	84,515	87,395
Emergency Management Office	6,540	21,324	6,563
Total Program Expenses	184,383	197,734	332,423
Ordinary Recoveries	105,353	118,731	215,457
TCA Purchase Requirements	1,074	1,220	1,389
Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs)	72.2	66.6	74.2